

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

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Now They're Collectors' Items

No. 4 — W. Bert Foster, H. Irving Hancock, Frank Gee Patchin,
Capt. F. S. Brereton, Bracebridge Hemming

By J. Edward Leithead



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In addition to his large output of dime novels for Street & Smith, and his serials for story-papers for young people, W. Bert Foster found time and inspiration to do numerous hard-cover books for boys (and books for girls as well). Did Foster write for the Edward Stratemeyer Syndicate? I cannot say with certainty that he did; I knew him and his wife a long time, often visited them in New York, but neither ever mentioned his writing for Stratemeyer, though writing and writers were chief topics of conversation, Mrs. Foster also being an author.

A letter from Foster to Ralph P. Smith, dated May 28, 1925, refers to Stratemeyer in this wise:

"The only editor of *Good News* whom I ever knew was Mr. Edward Stratemeyer, author of the 'Dave Porter' and 'Rover Boys' stories."

Nothing about Foster writing for the Syndicate or that he had ever worked for Stratemeyer. Yet he may have done so, and Stanley A. Pachon is not only convinced that Foster did but offers a very good reason for believing it. This goes back to a letter Pachon wrote me in 1962; it was about the pseudonym "Louis Arundel" and Pachon said:

"This name was attached to the 6 vol. Motor Boat Boys Series put out by Donohue. But I have always assumed that Rathborne was the author of this series unless some of the books were written by Foster and some by Rathborne."

It could be that Foster and Rath-

borne wrote the Motor Boat Boys Series together, although Foster did quite a few for Donohue on his own, and Mr. Pachon supplied the missing titles of a series of Northern books for boys published by the Chicago firm, the Clint Webb Series—*Swept Out to Sea*, or, *Clint Webb Among the Whalers*, *The Frozen Ship*, or, *Clint Webb Among the Sealers*, *From Sea to Sea*, or, *Clint Webb on the Windjammer*, *The Sea Express*, or, *Clint Webb and the Sea Tramp*.

Pachon said further, "I am quite certain that Foster wrote for the Stratemeyer Syndicate. Since the Ruth Fielding Series"—by Foster—"was published by Cupples & Leon, who, in the early years bought all their juvenile material from the Syndicate, there can be no doubt that he was one of that group of writers."

Ralph Adimari, in a letter dated in 1961, says the Syndicate was formed about 1903—that would be three years before Foster joined Street & Smith—and "Howard R. Garis, Lillian C. Garis and St. George Rathborne are known by me to have definitely written for it." Mr. Adimari further states that Mrs. Garis used the pseudonym "Laura Lee Hope" and "she aided her husband, Howard R., in writing his stories and both wrote voluminously for the Edward C. Stratemeyer writing syndicate." Also, Adimari says that Garis used the noms "Marion Davidson," "Clarence Young," "Victor Appleton" and "Lester Chadwick."

For the Penn Publishing Co., under his own name, W. Bert Foster wrote

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the following: With Washington at Valley Forge (1902), With Ethan Allen at Ticonderoga (1903), The Eve of War (The Civil War), The Lost Galleon, In Alaskan Waters. The two Revolutionary War stories are both illustrated by F. A. Carter, who did many nickel weekly and fifteen-cent paperback book covers for Street & Smith. At least one book bearing Foster's name had the Grosset & Dunlap imprint, The Quest of the Silver Swan, A Tale of Ocean Adventure.

I have mentioned numerous cloth-bound boys' books put out by Philadelphia publishers, Porter & Coates, Henry T. Coates & Co., John C. Winston Co., David McKay, Penn Publishing Co., and J. B. Lippincott Co. There was still another publishing house the Henry Altemus Co., who did a big business in cloth-bound, illustrated attractive books for boys and girls, none priced above 50 cents. There were no titles by Alger, Ellis, Castlemon or any of the other big name boys' writers of that time that I know of; but there was at least one author writing under his own name—and, I suspect, writing other books for the Altemus Co. under pen-names—who was a prolific writer of dime novels for Frank Tousey and Street & Smith, and good ones—Harrie Irving Hancock.

Hancock's many and varied series for Henry Altemus show him as an old pro who knows how to write for boys. In an Altemus catalogue are listed The Motor Boat Club Series by Hancock—The Motor Boat Club of the Kennebec, or, The Secret of Smugglers' Island, The Motor Boat Club at Nantucket, or, The Mystery of the Dunstan Heir, The Motor Boat Club in Florida, or, Laying the Ghost of Alligator Swamp—seven volumes in all, adventure, largely afloat, and mystery.

An up-to-date series for those days —1910-1911—The Submarine Boys Series by Victor G. Durham (could be Hancock under a nom)—The Submarine Boys on Duty, or, Life on a

Diving Torpedo Boat, The Submarine Boys and the Middies, or, The Prize Detail at Annapolis, The Submarine Boys and the Spies, or, Dodging the Sharks of the Deep, The Submarine Boys For the Flag, or, Deeding Their Lives to Uncle Sam—seven in this series, too, preparing for a war that was soon to erupt. These tales were definitely new stuff, not a rehash of old.

Two of Hancock's young heroes trained for the Army and the Navy. The West Point Series—Dick Prescott's First Year at West Point, or, Two Chums in the Cadet Gray, volume two was Prescott's second year, volume three the third, and the series ended with Dick Prescott's Fourth Year at West Point, or, Ready to Drop the Gray for Shoulder Straps.

The Annapolis Series had Dave Darrin's First Year at Annapolis, or, Two Plebe Midshipmen at the U. S. Naval Academy, followed Darrin thru second and third and finally Dave Darrin's Fourth Year at Annapolis, or, Headed for Graduation and the Big Cruise. Another Dave Darrin series was started, but I have only one title, Dave Darrin at Vera Cruz, or, Fighting With the U. S. Navy in Mexico.

These boys, Prescott and Darrin, I should mention, first appeared in The Grammar School Boys Series (4 volumes), The High School Boys Series (4 volumes) and the High School Boys' Vacation Series (4 volumes), all by Hancock, and he made them entertaining tales of school life in general, and, in particular, school athletics. Gilbert Patten started a trend when he popularized stories of school and college athletics with the Brothers Merriwell.

Boys of the Army Series by Hancock was the second of the Altemus series I remember reading—the first was The Pony Rider Boys Series, which I'll mention shortly — Uncle Sam's Boys in the Banks, or, Two Recruits to the United States Army, Uncle Sam's Boys on Field Duty, or, Winning Corporal's Chevrons, Uncle

Sam's Boys as Sergeants, or, Handing Their First Real Commands, Uncle Sam's Boys in the Philippines, or, Following the Flag Against the Moros.

The Pony Rider Boys Series was by Frank Gee Patchin and described the adventures of some Eastern boys in the more modern West, but still lively enough to make good reading. They were accompanied by a professor—I forget his name. And the names of the boys escape me, too, except that of the leader of the group, one Tad, whose freckles caused him to be nicknamed "pinto" or something like that. He owned a pony that could do tricks like a circus horse. You can get some idea of what they encountered in the West from a few of the titles—The Pony Rider Boys in the Rockies, or, The Secret of the Lost Claim, The Pony Rider Boys in Texas, or, The Veiled Riddle of the Plains, The Pony Rider Boys in Montana, or, The Mystery of the Old Custer Trail. There were twelve volumes altogether, but somehow I got only six of them. After adventuring in the Grand Canyon (Vol. 7), and a period of patrol duty with the Texas Rangers (Vol. 8) the Pony Riders turn up in the Carolina Mountains, the Blue Ridge (Vol. 9), go on an exciting quest in the Maine wilderness (Vol. 10), then strike southward again to the Louisiana canebrake (Vol. 11), and finish up the long and interesting series in Alaska among the gold seekers of Taku Pass."

The Altemus Co., also published The Circus Boys Series by Edgar B. P. Darlington (if it wasn't a nom), numbering five and beginning with the Circus Boys on the Flying Rings; or, Making the Start in the Sawdust Life, The Circus Boys Across the Continent; or, Winning New Laurels on the Tanbark, The Circus Boys in Dixie Land; or, Winning the Plaudits of the Sunny South, The Circus Boys on the Mississippi; or, Afloat with the Big Show on the Big River, and The Circus Boys on the Plains; or, The Young Advance Agents of the

Show.

The late William M. Burns was justifiably proud of his collection of nearly 1000 boys' cloth-bound books (as well as his dime novel collection) and particularly prized his "complete file of Brereton's books for boys." Captain Frederick Sadlier Brereton, later Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel of the Royal Army Medical Corps, is hardly as well-known as a writer for boys on this side of the ocean as George Alfred Henty, but, as Mr. Burns explains, one reason for that is that so few of Brereton's books were published in the U. S. A. Not that they wouldn't have sold had they been available, for Burns considered "Brereton's tales were fully as good as any Henty ever wrote," and that, with good reason, Brereton was "called England's second Henty."

A glance at some of the Brereton titles will reveal that he chose historical backgrounds for his books just as Henty did—A Gallant Grenadier, On the Field of Waterloo, With Wellington in Spain, A Hero of Lucknow, With Rifle and Bayonet, Jones of the 64th. He did even fewer with settings in this part of the globe than Henty; a story of the Spanish-American War entitled Under the Star-Spangled Banner, and a tale of the French and Indian War, How Canada Was Won, according to Mr. Burns, "Very, very similar to Henty's book on the same subject titled, 'With Wolfe in Canada'." Many of these books in Burns' collection were published by Blackie and Sons of London, and I know they turned out a very fine-looking juvenile. All this and much more, including a portrait of Captain Brereton and a biographical sketch, you will find in William M. Burns' very fine article, "Boys' Books Written by Capt. F. S. Brereton," in the August 15, 1954 issue of Dime Novel Roundup.

When Street & Smith launched The Young Rover Library by "Gayle Richards" (William Wallace Cook), Link Rover, hero of the new library, was mentioned as the American Jack Harkaway. But, although I never read

but a few Harkaways (because they didn't come my way), I never thought there was any comparison between Jack Harkaway and Link Rover, which is not to say that I didn't and still do, think highly of other work of Cook's, especially his Buffalo Bill novels. No doubt he did the best he could with the character he was supposed to create, but Young Rover Library didn't last long.

Different with Harkaway, vastly so. He has never really been forgotten. As well as his appearances in English publications, there were plenty of issues of Wide Awake Library (Tousey) recounting the adventures of Jack Harkaway and his son by Bracebridge Hemyng (and some Dick Lightheart novels by the same author). As I'm not too well informed on the subject I'd like to quote from a good article, unsigned, titled, "Modern Scenic Backgrounds of Old Dime Novels," published in Dime Novel Roundup for October 1945:

" . . . I will give the list of the first Harkaway stories Jack Harkaway's School Days, Jack Harkaway Afloat, Jack Harkaway Among the Savages, Jack Harkaway's Escape, Jack Harkaway at Oxford, Jack Harkaway and the Black Band, Jack Harkaway Among the Brigands, Jack Harkaway and the Spy, Jack Harkaway Trapped.

"The famous stories made their first appearance in The Boys of England and became immensely popular both in England and America . . . Jack Harkaway, during his school days, had made a faithful and devoted friend, Dick Harvey. And also Professor Mole. While Monday had become his faithful and courageous follower ever since Harkaway had rescued him from the savages on a South Pacific island.

"Jack and his friend Dick Harvey, on account of his wife's health, paid a visit to Italy and resided for a time in Naples. While dwelling in that city, Harkaway came in contact with a distinguished party calling himself the Prince of Valanova, who from time

to time appeared in Naples and spent large sums of money in lavish style. This person was in reality the brigand chief, Baroni, who had an old castle on the Volturno River, where, by the aid of secret passages, he gave the impression of his being in one place when actually he was in another. Jack and his wife were kidnapped by this brigand (Hunston, an old enemy of Jack's, joining the brigands against him); but the Harkaways escaped through the efforts of Harvey and Monday, the latter trailing the Italian brigands in the same fashion as he followed the savages to their island home in the far Pacific. Jack and his friends had a whole series of adventures in their war against Baroni, which terminated in the capture of the brigand chief, his trial and punishment.

"The Harkaway stories reached the height of their popularity after the author, Bracebridge Hemyng, came to America and wrote exclusively for Frank Leslie.

"The Harkaways had one child, a boy, and young Jack Harkaway attained a popularity only second to his famous father. Titles of the American stories: Jack Harkaway in America, Jack Harkaway Out West, Jack Harkaway Among the Indians, Jack Harkaway in Search of the Mountain of Gold, Jack Harkaway on the Prairie, Jack Harkaway and the Secret of Wealth.

"While his father and friends were on the way to the Black Hills, young Jack was at Prof. Mole's Academy. He was there only a short time, but made some friends and one vindictive enemy.

"Jack Senior met with disaster, was captured by the pirate chief, Hunston, who took him to the lair of the Malay pirates, the pirate city of Sula Nangala. He was treated to great indignities by Hunston, who confined him in an iron cage on piles in the bed of a river. Young Jack, with the assistance of friends including Prof. Mole and Monday, started for Sula Nangala to rescue his father, but they

met the pirates and were themselves taken prisoner. Young Jack contrived to escape and liberate his father, and, capturing a boat, they fled the pirate stronghold, to return later for vengeance. The scene of all this was the South Seas, in the hundreds of small islands in the Coral Sea that once were the lair of the Malay pirates and the savage head hunters.

"Titles of The Young Jack Harkaway Series: Young Jack Harkaway at Mole's Academy, Young Jack Harkaway in Search of His Father, Young Jack Harkaway Among the Pirates, Young Jack Harkaway on the Isle of Palms, Young Jack Harkaway, or The Last Stronghold of the Black Flag."

William M. Burns once wrote a two-part article about the creator of Jack Harkaway, "The Works of Bracebridge Hemming," published in the May and June 1945 issues of Dime Novel Roundup. At the conclusion of the second part he said, "Some American firm once published the 'Harkaway' series in cloth-bound books, but at this late day I cannot recall just who that firm was."

Only just recently (1966) I found out who this publisher was, The Federal Book Company, of New York, and since a list of the titles may be of assistance to some collector I will give it here:

Jack Harkaway Library

An Entirely New Edition from New Plates. Revised and re-edited. Handsomely Bound in Cloth. The author, Bracebridge Hemming, is conceded by all who know his works to be the most entertaining writer of stories for boys the world has ever

known. He takes Jack and his companions on tours of adventure all over the world, and every line he has written about them is just teeming with humor, life and thrilling action. No better stories of adventure in school and out, on land and sea, have ever been written. (Copyright about 1901): Jack Harkaway's School Days, Jack Harkaway's Friends, Jack Harkaway After School Days, Jack Harkaway Afloat and Ashore, Jack Harkaway Among the Pirates, Jack Harkaway at Oxford, Jack Harkaway's Struggles, Jack Harkaway's Triumphs, Jack Harkaway Among the Brigands, Jack Harkaway's Capture, Jack Harkaway's Return, Jack Harkaway Around the World, Jack Harkaway in America, Jack Harkaway's Perils, Jack Harkaway in China, Jack Harkaway and the Red Dragon, Jack Harkaway in Greece, Jack Harkaway's Pluck, Jack Harkaway's Resolve, Jack Harkaway in Australia, Jack Harkaway and the Bushrangers, Jack Harkaway's Confidence, Jack Harkaway's Duel, Jack Harkaway's Battle With Turks.

The W. L. Allison Co. and Donohue also issued cloth bound editions of the Harkaway stories.

The End

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- 275. Floyd E. Stewart, Star Route, Eden Mills, Vt. 05653 (New Member)
- 276. E. H. Hammond, 4612 South Blackwelder, Oklahoma City, Okla 73109 (New member)
- 277. Richard S. Sprague, 235 Stevens Hall, Univ. of Maine, Orono, Me. 04473 (New member)
- 101. Charles Rothstein, 155 W. Brookline St., Boston, Mass. 02118 (New add.)
- 33. Albert D. Stone, 6 High St., Milford, N. H. 03055 (New address)
- 167. Gerald Goldsman, 630 Main St., Buffalo, N. Y. 14203 (New address)

NEWSY NEWS

Ralph F. Cummings

W. B. Ragsdale (H. H. Bro. #220) loves the Roundup and the Brotherhood as well, and is able to fill in a lot of his wants in Marriwell Series, of which he is a real died in the wool fan, and collector of them. Beter send him your lists fellers, maybe he can use 25 or 30 yet, to complete his sets of them.

Ken Daggett, H. H. Bro. #29 is hoping he can make a trip down thru the west, southwest and maybe up in the northern states, a hunting for old rocks and minerals, as he has become quite a rock hound now, and best of all, he loves it, too.

Herbert Kenney wrote some time ago that he wanted to take a trip up to Northport, Maine, if he could get off his job for a week or thereabouts. Says they sure keep him very busy, and it's got him a wondering. As he asked me last fall if I'd like to go, and I said I sure would. So it's got him a guessing.

Have a clipping taken from the Worcester Evening Gazette, Wed. Feb. 16th—"U. S. Locks up Robin and Batman. The Library of Congress has a collection of them and they figure they are valuable enough to keep them locked up, or rather behind locked doors. They have some 12,000 or so. old comics or maybe 12,500 of them, and believe they are the world's largest collection of them."

They are just plain comics, but you see what our nation's capitol thinks of them?

NEWS NOTE

Charles Bragin has donated complete sets of the Merriwell Series to the Detroit Public Library, the Cincinnati Public Library and the University of Illinois Library. It is understood that these will be available on a limited basis to holders of library cards. Other libraries having complete sets are the Yale University

Library and Brandeis University Library.

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